Form No. 10-300 (Rev. 10-74)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Riverside Historic District, situated on an oxbow of the Ohio River, is a primarily residential area which was developed in the last two quarters of the nineteenth and first quarter of the twentieth centuries. The district is noteworthy for its representation of the domestic and ecclesiastical styles in vogue during this period and for the architectural integrity and cohesiveness which it possesses. The northwestern end of the district was part of the Original Plan (1818) and Upper Enlargement (1819) of Evansville and was developed on a standard grid plan, with the structures for the most part facing Riverside Drive and First and Second Streets instead of the cross streets. Although zoning ordinances do not seem to have been developed until the 1920's, most of the buildings adhere to a minimum setback and lot size. Photographs taken during the last decade of the nineteenth century show a pleasant prosperous neighborhood with well planted (although unpaved) streets.

Most of the intrusions in the district are unsympathetic in terms of scale and material rather than of use, such as the 8 story brick and concrete apartment building located at the intersection of Shawnee and Sunset Drives or the two story apartment building at the intersection of Chandler and First Streets which is clad in aluminum siding. There are very few vacant lots, and most of those are located along the eastern edge of Third Street. The general use of the structures has changed very little; most of the residential structures have remained so, although many of them have become multi-family dwellings. Some non-residential but compatible uses exist as well, such as an interior decorator's studio, frame shop, and offices for the American Cancer Society. The commercial edges of the area have, for the most part, remained along Walnut Street and in the area known as Haynie's Corner at the intersection of Adams Avenue and Second Street. The district has not been as threatened by commercial and industrial development as other urban historic districts have been because it lies slightly to the south and east of the area of Evansville where waterfront activity was located. The riverfront adjacent to the district has never been commercially developed due to shifting sand bars which made the edge of the river almost unnavigable.

The district is characterized by streets lined with large shade trees. First Street is paved in brick; modern paving materials have been used on the other streets.

The following examples are representative of the quality and diversity of structures in the Riverside Historic District.

- 1. 400 S.E. Riverside Dr. The Viele-Koch House is one of the more ornate examples in the district of the French Second Empire style applied to domestic architecture. The core of this brick structure was completed in 1856 with simple brick walls and a cross gabled roof. In c. 1872-1873 the roof was rebuilt in the more fashionable Mansard pitch and cast iron and pressed metal ornament were added to the roof line, dormers, doorways, etc. Stylistic "improvements" such as these were not uncommon here as the more affluent residents travelled and were exposed to European tastes in architecture.
- 605 S.E. Riverside Dr. The John Morford Stockwell House, also known as Morgan

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STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Riverside Historic District is significant for the quality and diversity of its architecture and for the number of persons of local and state significance who have lived there.

The city of Evansville was originally settled in the early nineteenth century on an oxbow of the Ohio River, laid out in a standard grid plan that was oriented to the river bank. That original settlement had by the middle of the nineteenth century become the downtown district, with the prime residential area being located just southeast in what is known as the Riverside Historic District. The plan of the district and downtown retains its original orientation to the river, despite the growth of the rest of the city along streets laid according to the cardinal points.

Developed primarily in the last two quarters of the 19th and first quarter of the 20th centuries, the district housed many of Evansville's most prominent citizens, including affluent merchants, professionals, manufacturers, and others. As might be expected, the neighborhood featured many imposing houses exhibiting the wealth of their owners, but it also contained more modest residences owned by clerks, shopkeepers, or craftsmen.

In time, and particularly during the period between the two World Wars, the descendants of the original families began to move out, and the area deteriorated as more and more of these substantial houses were divided into smaller rental units or converted to other uses. Efforts to reverse this trend began in the late 1940's and have gained momentum, particularly in recent years with the formation of the Riverside Neighborhood Association and the adoption in 1975 of a local ordinance creating the Original Evansville Preservation Commission. Based upon State enabling legislation, the ordinance has charged the Commission with the authority to approve or disapprove any new construction, razing or external changes to any property located in a district of approximately 18 blocks located within the Riverside Historic District (see map).

The Riverside Historic District is presently experiencing a return to respectability, with more and more persons buying property with an eye to rehabilitation and owner occupancy. A federally funded housing rehabilitation program introduced in 1977 is expected to contribute substantially to the improvement of the neighborhood. The Riverside Historic District was determined eligible for the National Register on June 8, 1976.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

See Continuation Sheet

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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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The Riverside Historic District, with slightly different boundaries, was determined eligible for the National Register of Historic Places on June 8, 1976. The request for a determination was submitted by Jeffrey Marston, Director of the Department of Metropolitan Development, Evansville, Indiana.

The John Augustus Reitz House at 224 S.E. First Street was independently listed on the National Register on October 15, 1973.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

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Manor, was constructed c. 1850-51, and is one of the few Greek Revival structures extant in Evansville. The three story pilasters at its corners support a deep, simple architrave. The window treatment is quite typical of the style with slightly projecting surrounds terminating on the first and second floors in shaped lintels with projecting moldings and crosettes. The original low hipped roof had a polygonal lantern. The current bracketed pediments on the east and west elevations are later additions.

- 3. 700 Sunset Ave. The Gilbert house was designed and built by Manson Gilbert in 1912. Although the Second Renaissance Revival was in vogue at this time, the choice of style may well have been influenced by Gilbert's residence while a student in Italy. Most of the development in this area did not occur until the first quarter of the twentieth century.
- 4. 1300 S.E. Riverside Dr. The Ingle House, build in 1913, is representative of the houses built in this end of the district, known as Ewing's Addition. This English cottage style house has stuccoed walls, lead-camed windows, and a slate roof. The slate is of varied hues cut in large "rustic" pieces, a roof treatment quite common in the area.
- 5. 214 S. E. First St. The Garvin House (c.1860) is noteworthy for its Italianate cast iron door and window surrounds. The round arched window and door openings are enframed by delicate colonettes supporting rope and bead and reel moldings. The pedimented portico was probably added to this structure during the height of the Colonial Revival's popularity, as were porticos and porches to other structures in the district.
- 6. 224 S.E. First St. The John Augustus Reitz House is the only structure in the Riverside Historic District to be listed independently in the National Register of Historic Places at this time. The elegant French Second Empire house is maintained as a house museum, open to the public. It also has cast iron and pressed metal ornament, similar to that at the Viele-Koch house.
- 7. 301 S.E. First St. St. Paul's Episcopal Church was designed in 1885 by the Reid brothers, a then local firm that gained national prominence soon thereafter for their design of the famous Hotel del Coronado in San Diego. The use of two types of limestone, Bedford and Green River, creates a polychromatic effect more subtle than that seen in most Victorian Gothic structures. The interior was reconstructed after a serious fire in 1938.
- 8. 310 S.E. First St. Begun in 1878 and completed two years later, the Nisbet House displays an exuberant combination of High Victorian and Second Empire elements. Designed by the firm of Boyd and Brickley, the structure was one of the largest houses built in Evansville.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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- 9. 313-315 S.E. First St. A deed reference to Stockwell-Wheeler House occurs in 1839. This two story brick double house is one of the earliest buildings surviving, and is unusual in Evansville because of the Federal influence in the design and its urban character. A similar structure was located in the 200 block of S.E. First St. until its demolition several years ago.
- 10. 606 S.E. First St. The Gross House, designed by Frank Schlotter, presents another combination of edectic elements, including Moorish motifs such as horse-shoe shaped windows and loggia supported by Byzantine columns with foliate capitals. In addition to the combination of architectural elements, a variety of materials and textures such as brick, shaped shingles, stone, and stained and leaded glass are employed. The elements contained in this 1896 structure are found in simpler structures in the Riverside Historic District as well as in other domestic buildings of the period in Evansville.
- 11. 726 S.E. First St. The Sonntag-Bayard House (1863) is a house in the Italian Villa mode which combines many of the characteristics of this style such as projecting tower or campanile, loggia, and low roof line obscured by a bracketed cornice. The property has retained some of its landscape features, such as the wrought iron fence supported by stone coping and gate posts, and limestone walks.
- 12. 813 S.E. First St. The Bosse House was designed by Clifford Shopbell, an architect with surprising stylistic versatility. This structure, built in 1916, is an exercise in the principles of the so-called Prairie School, utilizing horizontal lines, deep eaves and projecting gabled bay or "prow". This particular building, however, does not have the organic surface ornament found in the work of other Prairie School architects.
- 13. 20 Adams Ave. The Shanklin House, designed by Irving Pond, is representative of structures in the Riverside Historic District which were built in the style of Colonial or Georgian Revival or which had elements from those styles applied. The current porch on this 1895 house is a later addition which probably replaced the original, more symmetrical entry porch.
- 14. 1131 S.E. First St. The Duke House, a clapboarded frame structure (1892), is typical of the cottages built by prosperous brick layers, carpenters, etc. in the southeastern end of the district. Evansville had several flourishing millwork companies for many years and it is therefore quite likely that the turned and scrollsawn work on this structure was produced locally.

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- 15. 121-127 Chestnut St. This block of four attached houses, called Owen's Block (1882), was the first structure of its kind in Evansville. Because it is situated so close to the sidewalk and because of its raised first floor and "English" basements with areaways, it is an unusually urban structure for Evansville. The brick and slate work were skillfully executed.
- 16. 411 S.E. Second St. Most of the French Second Empire detailing on the Dyer House is concentrated on the front. Constructed in 1873, this painted brick house utilizes belt courses to unify the arched windows and entrance. Above the bracketed cornice, an iron crested tower form, dormer windows, slate sheathing and finials create a credible mansard.
- 17. 609 S.E. Second St. The First Presbyterian Church was designed by Robert Boyd in a style described by local newspapers as "castelated Gothic." Constructed in 1873 of red brick, its two front diagonally placed towers are visible from throughout the district. Although some trim is of limestone, most is of pressed metal made locally by J.B. Mesker. Some original interior features remain, including walnut pews and wainscoting and several traceried windows.
- 18. 709 S.E. Second St. The Foster House (1860) is more representative of the Italianate structures in Evansville than is the Sonntag-Bayard House. Its buff colored brick, however, is unusual and may have been brought in on the river. The original lantern has been removed and the entrance porch, front door, and side veranda are additions, probably done in the first decade of this century.
- 19. 225 Oak St. The Zurstadt House (c.1853) is representative of the more modest brick and frame houses in the district. The two story, three bay plan with side entrance and porch (added in the early 1890's) is common in this area and in other sections of Evansville.
- 20. 230 Chandler Ave. This 1860 house is another example of the district's more modest housing. The Greek Revival entrance and bracketed gable are typical of the eclecticism practiced by craftsmen in their own houses.

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The district has managed to retain its cohesiveness and turn-of-the-century flavor despite past problems and threats to its existence. The stately homes and large shade trees lining brick-paved Southeast First Street particularly convey a sense of what it was like to live in a prosperous Evansville neighborhood in the last century, while the neighborhood as a whole offers a good representation of housing types and styles from the period. The district contains numerous buildings designed by the leading architects practicing in Evansville in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centures, such as Henry Mursinna (John Augustus Reitz House); Manson Gilbert (700 Sunset Drive); Robert Boyd and Henry H. Brickley (310 Southeast First Street, First Presbyterian Church); Clifford Shopbell (813 Southeast First Street, 408 Southeast Riverside Drive): James and Merritt Reid (St. Paul's Church): and Frank Schlotter (606 Southeast First Street). Some of the persons who built houses when the area was developed were affluent and able to travel to the east coast and abroad. They provided their architects or builders not only with sophisticated tastes, but also with furnishings which had been shipped back, such as elegant chandeliers, pier mirrors, and ornate fabrics. In addition, the German population in Evansville produced artisans and craftsmen capable of painting murals and laying intricate parquet floors.

Other houses in the district, not designed by architects, were often patterned after local vernacular styles. Their relative modesty complements the more elaborate structures, and adds to the district's diversity.

Most of the negative intrusions conform to the residential character of the district, but are unsympathetic in terms of scale and material. As can be seen on the map, many of these are located on the fringes of the district, so that their effect on its integrity is minimal. Also within the district are several neutral intrusions, most of which conform in use, scale and material, but which are of more recent vintage than others in the district. These structures, as well as several older buildings that have been substantially altered, do not seriously detract from the district's overall integrity.

The quality of the architecture, the workmanship, and the wide use of masonry and rich ornamental detail distinguish the Riverside Historic District from adjacent residential areas. This distinction was a factor in determining the district boundaries, as were differing land uses in adjacent areas and neighborhood cohesiveness.

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RIVERSIDE HISTORIC DISTRICT NATIONAL REGISTER NOMINATION
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Using Sections 30, 31, 32

That part of the Southeast Quarter of Section thirty (30), Township six (6) South, Range ten (10) West in Vanderburgh County, Indiana, more particularly described as follows:

Beginning at the southeast corner of said Quarter Section; thence North along east line of said Quarter Section 1790 feet; thence West for 2310 feet to the place of beginning: thence East 35° North along the centerline of Walnut Street for a distance of 785 feet; thence East 55° South along the centerline of Southeast Second Street for a distance of 545 feet; thence East 35° North 380 feet through an alley between Chestnut Street and Cherry Street; thence East 55° South along the centerline of Southeast Third Street for 1070 feet; thence East 35° North 380 feet through an alley between Mulberry Street and Chandler Avenue; thence East 55° South along the centerline of Southeast Fourth Street for 365 feet; thence West 35° South 380 feet through an alley between Chandler Avenue and Powell Avenue; thence East 55° South along the centerline of Southeast Third Street for 570 feet to the centerline of Parrett Street; thence South 0° along the centerline of Parrett Street for 165 feet; thence West 35° South along Washington Avenue for 280 feet; thence East 55° South along the centerline of Southeast Second Street for 445 feet; thence South 0° along the centerline of Parrett Street for 1120 feet; thence West 0° along the centerline of Jackson Avenue for 200 feet; thence South 0° along the centerline of Southeast First Street for 245 feet to the centerline of Riverside Drive; thence West 50° North along the centerline of East Riverside Drive for 325 feet; thence West 68° North along the centerline of East Riverside Drive for 165 feet; thence West 22° South for 190 feet; thence West 68° North to and along the centerline of an unimproved road for a distance of 745 feet; thence West 22° South for a distance of 180 feet; thence West 55° North for 1245 feet; thence East 86° North for a distance of 175 feet; thence East 35° North for 270 feet; thence West 55° North for 350 feet; thence West 35° South for a distance of 35 feet along the center-line of Oak Street; thence West 73° North for 260 feet; thence West 55° North for a distance of 830 feet along the centerline of Southlane Drive to the place of beginning.

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assistance from Laurie Hammel, Joan Marchand, and members of the Riverside Neighborhood Association National Register Committee: Paul Arnold, Lucille Gooch, Bill Gumberts, Pam Guthrie, Gwendolyn Koch, and Margret Maier.